The Plouumans tale compylled by syr Geffray Chaucher knyght.

Phot. of HEH 51721

The prologue.

Here begynneth the Plow-mans Prologue.

THe plowemā plucked vp hys plowe.
Whan midsomer mone was comē in
And said his beestes shuld eate ynow
And lige in the grasse vp to the chynne
They ben feble both oxe and cowe
Of he in nys left but bone and skynne
He shoke of shere and coultre ot drowe
And honge his harneys on a pynne.

THe toke his tabard and his staffe e[illegible]e
And on his heed he set hys hat
And sayde he wolde saynt Thomas seke
On pylgremage he goth forth platte
In scrippe he bare both breed and lekes
He was forswonke and all forswatte
Men might haue sene thrzough both h[illegible]che
And euery wang toth and where it sat (kes

OUr hoste behelde well about
And lawe thys man was sunne ybrent

He knewe well by hys senged shoute
And by hys clothes that were to rent
He was a man wont to walke about
He nas nat alwaye in cloystre ypent
He coulde not religeouslyche loute
And therfore was he fully shent.

COur host him axed, what man art thou?
Syr (quod he) I am an hyne
For I am wont to go to the plowe
And erne my meate yet that I dyne
To swete and swinke I make auowe
My wyfe and chyldren therwyth to fynde
And serue god and I wist howe
But we leude men bene full blynde.

CFor clerkes saye we shullen be fayne
For her lyuelod swet and swynke
And they ryght nought vs gyue agayne
Neyther to eate ne yet to drynke
The mowe by lawe, as they sayne
Vs curse and dampne to hel brynke
Thus they putten vs to payne
wyth candles queynt and belles clyncke

They

¶ They make vs thralles at her lust
And sayne we mowe nat eles be saued
They haue the corne and we the duste
who speaketh ther agayn they say he raued
¶ what mā ꝙ our host canst thou preach
Come nere and tell vs some holy thyng
¶ Syr quod he, I herde ones teache
A prest in pulpyt a hood preachynge

¶ Saye on quod our host, I th: beseche.
Syr I am redy at your byddyng
I praye you that no man me reproche
whyle that I am my tale tellynge.

¶ Thus endeth the prologue, & here folo-
weth the fyrst parte of the tale.

A Sterne stryfe is stered newe
In many stedes in a stounde
Of sondry sedes that bene sewe
It semeth that some ben vnsounde
For some be great growen vngrounde
Some bene souble, symple and small
whether of hem is falser founde

The falser foule mote hym befall

¶ That one syde is that I of tel
Popes, cardynals and prelates
Parsons, monkes, and freers fell
Priours, abbotes of greate estates
Of heuyn and hell they kepe the yeates
And Peters successours they ben all
This is demed by olde dates
But falshed foule mought it befall

¶ The other syde ben poore and pale
And people put oute of prease
And seme caytyffes sore a cale
And euer in one without encrease
I clepeth lollers and lōdlese
Who toteth on hem they bene vntall
They ben arayed all for the peace,
But falshed foule mote it befall.

¶ Many a coūtreye haue I sought
To knowe the falser of these two
But euer my trauyle was for nought
All so ferre as I haue go
But as I wrandred in a wro

In a wodde beſyde a wall
Tho fowles ſawe I ſette tho
The fals foule mote hym befall

That one dyd plede ou the Popes ſyde
A gryffon of a grimme ſtature
A Pellycane withouten pryde
To theſe lollers layde his lure
He muſed his matter in meaſure
To counſayle Chriſt euer gan he call
The gryffon ſhewed as ſharpe as fyre
But falſhed foule mote it befall

The Pyllycan began to preache
Both of mercy and of mekeneſſe
And ſayd that Chryſt ſo gan vs teache
And meke and mercyable gan bleſſe
The Euangely beareth wytneſſe
A lambe he lykeneth Chriſt ouer al
In tokenynge that he mekeſt was
Sith pryde was out of heuen fal.

And ſo ſhoulde euery Chriſtened be
Preſtes, Peters ſucceſſoury

Beth

Beth lowlyche and of lowe degree.
And vsen none erthly honours
Neyther crowne, ne curious couertours
Ne pylloure, ne other proude pal
Ne nought to cofren vp great treasours
For falshed foule mote it befall

Preestes shoulde for no cattel plede.
But chasten hem in charyte
Ne to no bateyle shoulde men lede
For inhaunsyng of her awne degree
Nat wylne lytigynges in hye see
Ne soucraynte in house ne hall
All wordely worshippe defye and flee
For who so wylleth highnes foule shal fall

Alas who may such sayntes call
That wylneth weld erthly honour
As lowe as Lucifere such shall fall
In balefull blackenesse ybuylden her boure
That eggeth the people to errroure
And maketh them to hem thrall
To Christ I holde such one traytrur
As lowe as Lucifer suche one shall fall

That

That wylleth to be kynges peeres
And hygher than the Emperour
Some that were but pooze freers
Nowe wollen waxe a warryour
God is nat her gouernour.
That holdeth no man hys permagall
whyle couetyse is her counsaylour
All such falshed mote nede fal

¶ That hye on hozse willeth ryde
In glytterande golde of greate araye
Paynted and poztred al in pryde
No commen knight maye go so gay
Chaunge of clothynge euery day
Wyth golden gyrdles great and small
As boystous as it bere at bay
All suche falshed mote nede fall.

¶ Wyth pryde punyshed the pooze
And some they sustayne wyth sale
Of holy churche maketh an hoze
And fylleth her woombe wyth wyne and ale
Wyth money fylleth many a male
And chaffren churches when they fall

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That wylleth to be kynges peeres
And hygher than the Emperour
Some that were but poore freers
Nowe wollen ware a warryour
God is nat her gouernour.
That holdeth no man hys permagall
whyle couetyse is her counsaylour
All such falshed mote nede fal

¶ That hye on horse willeth ryde
In glytterande golde of greate araye
I paynted and portred al in pryde
No commen knight maye go so gay
Chaunge of clothynge euery day
wyth golden gyrdles great and small
As boystous as it bere at bay
All suche falshed mote nede fall.

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And some they sustayne wyth sale
Of holy churche maketh an hore
And fylleth her woombe wyth wyne and ale
wyth money fylleth many a male
And chaffren churches when they fall

And

And telleth the people a leude tale
Suche false faytours foule them befall

¶ Wyth chaunge of manye maner meates
with songe and solace syttyng long
And fylleth her wombe, and fast fretes
And from the meate to the gonge
And after meat wyth harpe and songe
And eche man mote hym lordes call
And hote spyces euer amonge
Suche false faytours foule hem fal

¶ And myters mo than one or two
I perled as the quenes heed
A staffe of golde, and pyrry lo
As heuy as it were made of lead
Wyth cloth of golde both newe and redde
Wyth glitterande golde as grene as gall
By dome wyll dampne men to deed
All suche faytours foule hem fall

¶ And Christes people proudly curse
Wyth brode boke, and braying bell
To putte pennyes in her purse

They woll sell both heuen and hel
And in her sentence and thou wylt dwel
They wyllen gesse in her gay hall
And though the soth thou of hem tell
In great curlynge shalt thou fal

That is blessed, that they blesse
And cursed that they curse woll
And thus the people they oppresse
And haue theyr lordshyppes at full
And many be merchauntes of woll
And to purs penyes woll come thrall
The poore people they all to pul
Suche false faytours full hem fall

Lordes mote to hem loute
Obeysaunt to her brode blessynge
They ryden wyth her royall route
On a courser, as it were a kinge
Wyth saddle of golde glytteryng
Wyth curyous harneys quayntly crallyd
Styroppes gaye of golde mastlyng
All suche falshed soule it befall

Chrystes

¶ Chriſtes myniſters clepen they bene
And rulen all in robberye
But Antichriſt they ſeruen clene
Attyred all in tyrannye
Wytneſſe of Johns prophecye
That Antichriſte is her admirall
Tyffelers attyred in trecherye
All ſuche faytours foule hem fall.

¶ Who ſayth that ſome of hem may ſynne
He ſhalbe done to be deed
Some of hem woll gladly wynne
All ayenſt that whyche god forbed
All holyeſt they clepen her heed
That of her rule is regall
Alas that euer they eten breed
For all ſuche falſhed woll foule fall

¶ Her heed loueth all honour
And to be worſchypped in worde and dede
Kynges mote to hem knele and coure
To the apoſtles, that Chriſt forbede
To Popes heſtes ſuche taketh more hede
Than to kepe Chriſtes commanndement

Of

Of gold and ſyluer mote ben her wede
They holdeth hym hole omnipotent

He ordayneth by hys ordynaunce
To paryſhe preeſtes a powere
To another a greater auaunce
A greater poynt to his miſtere
But for he is hyghest in erth here
To hym reſerueth he many a point
But to Chriſt that hath no pere
Reſerueth he neyther oppn no toynt

So ſemeth he aboue all
And Chriſt aboue hym nothynge
Whan he ſytteth in hys ſtall
Dampneth and ſaueth as hym thynke
Suche pride tofore god doth ſtynke
An angell bad John to hym nat knele,
But only to god do his bowynge
Such wyllers of worſhip muſt nede euyll (kele
They ne clepen Chriſt, but ſanctus deus,
And clepen her hedd Sanctiſſimus
They that ſuche a ſecte ſewys

I trowe they taken hem amysse
In erth here they haue her blysse
Her hye master is Belyal
Chrystes people from hem wysse
For all suche false wyll foule fall

¶ They mowe both bynde and lose
And all is for her holy lyke
To saue or dampne they mowe chose
Betwene hem now is great stryke
Many a man is kylled with a knyke
To wete whych of hem haue lordshyp shall
For suche Chryst suffred woundes fyue
For all suche falshed wyll foule fall

¶ Chryst saed: Qui gladyo percutit
Qwyth swerde shall dye
He bad his preestes peace and gryth
And bad hem not drede for to dye
And bad theiu be both symple and slye
And carke not for no'cattell
And trusteth on god that sytteth on hye
For all falseshall foule fall

¶ These wollen make men to swere

Ayenſt Chryſtes commaundement
And Chryſtes membres all to tere
On roode, as he were newe yzent
Suche lawes they make by commen aſſent
Eche on it choweth as a ball
Thus the pooze be fully ſhent
But euer falſhed foule it befall.

¶ They vſen no ſymonye
But ſellen churches and pziozyes
Ne they vſen no enuye
But curſen all hem contrarye
And hyzeth men by dayes and yeres
wyth ſtrength to holde hem in her ſtall
And culleth all her aduerſaries
Therfoze falſhed foule thou fall

¶ Wyth purſe they purchaſe perſonage
Wyth purſe they paynen hem to plede
And men of warre they woll wage
To bzynge her enemyes to the dede
And lozdes lyues they woll lede
And moche take, and gyue but ſmall
But he it ſo get, from it ſhall ſhede
And make ſuche falſe right foule fall

They halowe nothynge but for hyre
Church, font, ne veſtment
And make orders in euerye ſhyre
But prieſtes paye for the parchement
Of riatours they taken rent
Therwith thy ſmere the ſhyppes ſakll
For many churches ben oft ſuſpent
All ſuch falſhed yet foule it fall.

Some lyueth nat in lecherye
But haunten wenches, widdowes & wyues
And punyſheth the poore for putrye
Them ſelfe it vſeth al theyr lyues
And but a man to them ſhryues
To heuen come neuer he ſhall
He ſhal be cucſed as be captyues
To hell they ſayne that he ſhall fall

There was more mercy in Saremyen
And in Nero, that neuer was good
Than is nowe in ſome of them
Whan he hath on hys furred hoode
They folowe Chriſt that ſhedde hys blode
To heuen, as buckette into the wall

Such

Such wreches ben worse than wode
And all such kaytours koule hem kall

¶ They gyue her almesse to the ryche
To mayntenours, and to men of law
For to lordes they woll be lyche
In harlottes sonne nat worthe an hawe
Soth kastenesse such han thawe
They kembe her crokettes with christal
And drede, of god they haue downe drawe
All suche kaytours koule hem kall

¶ They maken parsons for the pennye
And canons of her cardynals
Unnethes amongest hem all any
That he ne hath glosed the gospell kals
For Christ made neuer no cathedrals
Ne wyth hym was no cardynall
Wyth a Redde hatte as thyn mynstrals
But falched koule mote it betal

¶ Theyr tything, and her offering both
Ther clemeth it by possessyon
Therof nyll they none forgo
But robben men as raunsome
The tythynge of Turpe lucrum

Wyth these maisters is meynall
Tythynge of bribry, and larsō
Wyll make falshed woll foule fal

They taken to ferme her sompnours
To harme the people what they may
To pardoners, and false faytours
Sell her seales I dare well saye
And all to holden great array
To multiply heir moze metall
They drede full lytel domes day
Whan all suche shall foule fall

Suche harlottes shull men dysclaunder
Foz they shullen make her gree
And ben as proude as Alexaunder
And sayne to the pooze, wo be ye
By yere eche prestе shal paye hys fee
To encrease hys lemmans call
Suche heerdes shul wel yuel the
And all suche false shull foule fal

And yf a man be falsely famed
And wolde make purgacyon
Than woll the officers be a grameb

And aſſyng hym fro town to towne
So nede he muſt paye raunſome
Though he be clene, as is chriſtal
And than haue an abſolution
But all ſuche falſe ſchull foule fall

¶ Though he be gyltie of the deed
And that he maye money pay
All the whyle his purſe woll blede
He maye vſe it fro day to day
Theſe bychopes offycers gone full gay
And thys game they vſen ouer all
The poore to pyll is all theyr pray
All ſuche falſe ſchull foule fall

¶ Alas, god ordayned neuer ſuche lawe
Ne no ſuche crafte of couetyſe
He forbad it by hys lawe
Suche gouernours mowen of god agryſe
For all his rules is ryghtwyſe
Theſe newe poyntes ben pure papall
And goddes lawe they diſpyce
And all ſuche laytours ſchul foule fall

¶ They ſayne that Peter had the key
Of heuyn and hell, to haue and holde

I trowe Peter toke no money
For no synnes that he solde
Suche successours ben to bolde
In wynnyng all they: wytte they wyall
Here conscience is waxen colde
And all suche kaytours foule hem fall

Peter was neuer so great a fole
To leaue hys key wyth suche a lozell
Or to take suche cursed suche a tole
He was aduysed nothyng wel
I trowe they haue the key of hell
They: maister is of that place marchal
For there they dressen hem to dwell
And wyth false Lucifere there to fall

They ben as proude as Lucifarre
As angry, and as enuyous
From good fayth they ben full farre
In couetyse they ben curyous
To catche catell as couytous
As hounde, that for hungre woll al
Vngodly, and vngracyous
And nedely suche falshed shall foule fal

The pope and he were Peters heyre
Ye thynke he erreth in this cale

Whan chose of byschopes is in dispayre
To chosen hem in dyuers place
A lorde shall wrte to hym for grace
For hys clerke anoue pray he shall
So shall he spede hys purchase
And all suche false foule hem fal

¶ Though he can no more good
A lordes prayer shalbe spedde
Though he be wylde of wyll or wood
Nat vnderstandyng what men han redde
A leude boster and that god forbede
As a good byschoppe is my horse ball
Suche a Pope is foule be stede
And at last woll foule fall

¶ Hr maketh byschopes for erthlye thanke
And nothyng for Christes sake
Suche that ben ful fate and ranke
To soyle heale none hede they take
Al is well done what euer they make
For they shall answere at one fors all
For worldes thanke, suche worch and wake
And all suche false shall foule fall

¶ Such that canne nather Crede

wyth prayer shul be made prelates
Nother canne the gospell rede
Suche shul nowe welde hye estates
The hye godes frendshyp hem makes
They toteth on her sonne totall
Suche bere the kyes of hell yates
And all suche false shall soule fal

They forsake for Christes loue
Traueyle, hungre, thurst, and colde
For they ben ordred euer all aboue
Out of youthe tyll they ben olde
By the dore they go, nat in to the folde
To helpe theyr shepe they nought trauall
Hyred men all suche I hold
And all suche false foule hem fall

For Christ her kyng they woll forsake
And knowe hym nought for hys pouerte
For Christes loue they wol wake
And drynke peyment ale aparte
Of god they seme nothyng afferde
As iusty lyueth, as dyd Lamuall
And dryuen her shepe in to deserte
All such taytours shall foule fall

Chryst hath .xii. Apostels here
Nowe say they, there may be but one
That may nat erre in no manere
Who leueth nat this ben lost echone
Peter erred, so dyd nat John
Why is he cleped the principall
Christ cleped hym Peter, but hym selfe che
All false faytours foule hem fall (stone

Why cursen they the croysery
Christes christen creatures
For bytwene hem is now enuy
To be enhaunsed in honours
And christen lyuers with her labours
For they leuyn on no man mortall
But do to deth with dishonnurs
And all suche false foule hem fall

What knoweth a tylloure at the plowe
The popes name and what he hate
Hys crede suffyseth to hym ynowe
And knoweth a cardynal by hys hatte
Rough is the pooze buryght latte
That knoweth Christ hys god royal
Suche maters be not worth a gnatte

But suche false faytours foule hem fall

¶ A kynge shall knele and kysse his showe
Christ suffered a synfull to kysse hys fete
Ne thynketh he holdeth hym hye ynow
So Lucifer did, that hye sette
Such one me thynketh hym selfe forget
Eyther to the trouth he was nat call
Christ that suffered woundes wete
Shall make such falshed foule fal

¶ They layeth out her large nettes
For to take syluer and golde
Fallen coffers and sackes fetttes
There as they soules catche sholde
Her seruauntes be to them vnbold
But they can doublyn theyr rentall
To bygge hem castles, and bygge hē holde
And all suche false foule hem fall

¶ Here endeth the fyrste parte of thys tale, and herafter folowyth the secōde parte

TO accorde wyth thys worde fall
No more English can I fynde
Shewe another nowe I shall

The seconde parte.

For I haue moch to saye behynde
How preestes han the people pynde
As curteys Christ hath me kynde
And putte thys matter in my mynde
To make thys maner men amende

¶ Shortly to shende hem, and shew nowe
How wrongfully they worche and walke
O hye god, nothyng they tell, ne howe
But in goddes worde, telleth many a balke
In hernes holde hem and in balke
And preachin of tythes and offrende
And vntruely of the gospell talke
For hys mercy god it amende

¶ What is Antichrist to saye
But euyn Christes aduersarye
Suche hath now ben many a daye
To Christes bydynge full contrary
That from the trouth clene warry
Out of the waye they ben wende
And Christes people vntruely carry
God for hys pytye it amende

¶ That lyuen contrary to Christes like
In hye pryde agaynst mekenesse

Agaynst sufferaūce they vsen stryfe
And angre ayenst sobrenesse
Agaynst wisedome wylfulnesse
To Christes tales lytell tende
Agaynst measure outragiousnesse
But whan god woll it maye amende

Lordly lyfe ayenst lowlynesse
And demyn all wythout mercy
And couetyse ayenst largesse
Agaynst trewth trecherye
And agaynst almesse enuy
Agaynst Christ they comprehende
For chastyte they maynteyne lecherye
God for hys grace thys amende

Agaynst penauuce they vse delyghtes
Ayenst suffraunce stronge defence
Ayenst god they vsen euyll ryghtes
Ayenst pytye punyshementes
Open euyll ayenst contynence
Her wycked wynnyng worse dispende
Sobrenesse they sette in to dispence
But god for hys goodnesseit amende

Why cleymen thy holy his powers

And wranglen ayenst all hys histes
Hys lyuyng folowen they nothyng here
But lyuen worse than wytlesse beestes
Of fysche and flesche they louen feestes
As lordes they ben brode ykende
Of goddes poore they haten gestes
God for his mercy thys amende

Wyth dyuers suche shal haue her dome
That sayne that they be Christes frendes
And do nothyng as they shulde done
All suche ben falser than ben fendes
On the people they ley suche bendes
As god is in erth they han offende
Sucour for suche Christ now sende vs
And for his mercy thys amende

A token of antichrist they be
His careckes ben now wyde yknow
Receyued to preche shall no man be
Wythout token of him I trow
Eche christen preest, to prechyn owe
From god aboue they ben sende
Goddes worde, to all folke for to showe
Syn ull man for to amende
Christ sente the poore for to preche

The royall ryche he dyd nat so
Now dare no poore the people teache
For antichrist is ouer all her foe
Amonge the people he mote go
He hath bydden, all suche suspende
Some hath he hente, and thynketh yet mo
But all thys god may well amende

✠All tho that han the worlde forsake
And lyuen holy, as god badde
In to her pryson shullen be take
Betyn and bounden, and forth ladde
Herof I rede no man be dradde
Christ sayd, hys shulde be shende
Eche man ought herof be gladde
For god full well it woll amende

☞They toke on hem royall power
And say they haue swerdes two
One curse to hell, one slee men here
For at thys takynge Christ had no mo
Yet Peter had one of tho
But Christ, to Peter smyte gan defende
And in to sheth badde putte it in tho
And all such myscheues god amende

¶ Christ badde Peter kepe hys shepe
And wyth hys swerde forbade hym smyte
Swerde is no tole wyth shepe to kepe
But to sheperdes that shepe woll byte
Me thynketh such sheperdes ben to wyte
Ayen her shepe with swerde that contende
They dryue her shepe with great dispite
But all thys god maye well amende

¶ So successours to Peter be thei nought
Whome Christ made chefe pastoure
A swerde no sheperde vsen ought,
But he wold flee, as a bochoure
For who so were Peters successour
Sulde bere his shepe tyll his backe bende
And shadowe hem from euery shoure.
And all thys god may well amende

¶ Successours to Peter ben these
In that, that Peter Christes forsoke,
That had leuer the loue of god lese
Than a sheperde had to lese hys hock
He culleth the shepe as doth the coke
Of hem taken the woll vntrende
And falsely glose the gospell boke
God for his mercy them amende

¶ After Christe had take Peter the kay
Christ sayd he must dye for man
That Peter to Christ gan withsay
Christ badde hym go behynde sathan
Such coũsaylours many of these men han
For worldes wele, god to offende
Peters successours they ben for than
But all suche god may well amende

¶ For sathan is to say no more
But he that contrary to Christ is
In thys they lerne Peters lore
They sewen hym whan he dyd mysse
They folowe Peter forsothe in thys
In all that Christ wolde Peter reprehende
But nat in that, that lõgeth to heuyn blysse
For for his mercy hem amende

¶ Some of the apostels they sewé in case
Of ought that I can vnderstonde
Hym that betrayed Christ, Judas
That bare the purse in euery londe
And all that he myght sette on hone
He hydde and stale, and myspende
Lys rule these traytours han in honde
Almyghty god hem amende

And at the last hys lorde gan tray
Cursedly through hys false couetyse
So wolde these trayne hym for moneys
And they wysten in what wyse
They be seket of the selfe ensyse
From all sothnesse they ben frende
And couetyse chaungen with queyntyse
Almighty god all suche amende

Where Chryst on erthe here este sone
These wolde dampne hym to dye
All hys bestes they han forsone
And sayne hys sawes ben heresy
And ayenste hys commaundementes they
And dampne all hys to be made (crye
For it lyketh nat hem suche losenserye
God almyghtye it amende

These han more myghte in Englande here
Than hath the kynge and all hys lawe
They han purchased hem suche powere
To take hem whome lyste nat knawe
And saye that heresye is her sawe
And so to pryson woll hym sende
It was nat so by elder dawe
God for hys mercye it amende

The kynges lawe wol no man deme
Angerlyshe wt:houten answere
But yf anye man these mysqueme
He shalbe bayghteh as a bere
And yet well wozse they woll hym tere
And in prisone woll hem pende
In gyues, and in other gere
Whan god woll, it maye mende

The kynge taxeth nat hys men
But by assente of the commynalte
But these eche yere woll raunsom hem
Wayslerfullye, moze than doth he
Her scales by yere better be
Than is the kynges in extende
Her offycers han gretter fee
But thys mischefe god amende

Foz who so woll pzoue a testament
That is natte all wozth tenne ponnde
He shall paye foz the parchement
The thyzde parte of the moneye all rounde
Thus the people is raunsounde
They say suche parte to hem shulde apende
There as they gryppen it goth to groude
God foz hys mercy it amende

A simple fornication
Twentye shyllynges he shall paye
And than haue an absolution
And all the yere vsen it furthe he may
Thus they letten hem go a stray
They recke nat though the soule be brende
These kepen yuell Peters key
And al suche shepherdes god amende

Wonder is, that the parlyamente
And all the lordes of thys londe
Here to taken so lytell entente
To helpe the people out of her honde
For they ben harder in theyr bonde
Worse beate, and better brende
Than to the kynge is understande
God hym helpe thys to amende
What byshopes, what religions
Han in thys lande as muche laye fee
Lordshyppers and possessyons
Woze than the lordes, it semeth me
That maketh hem lese charyte
They mowe nat to god attende
Inerth they haue so hygh degree
God for his mercy it amende

¶ The Emperour yaf the pope sometyme
So hyghe lordyshp hym about
That at laste the lely kyme
The prude Pope putte hym out
So of thys realme is in doute
But lordes be ware and them defende
For nowe these folke be wonder stoute
The kynge and lordes now thys amende.

¶ Thus endeth the seconde parte of thys tale, and hereafter foloweth the thyrde

MOyses law forbode it to
That preestes shuld no lordshppes
Chistes gospel byddeth also (welde
That they shuld no lordshyp helde
Ne Christes Apostels were neuer so bolde
No suche lordeshippes to them enbrace
But smeren her shepe and kepe her folde
God emende hem for his grace

¶ For they ne ben but counterfete
Men may know hem by her fruyte
Her greetnesse maketh hem god forȝete
And take hys mekenesse in dispite
And they were poore and had but lyte

They nolde nat demen after the face
But nozysche her sheye, and hem nat byte
God amende hem for hys grace

¶ Gyson,

¶ What canst thou prech ayenst chanons
That men clepen seculere?
Peli. They ben curates of many townes
On erth they haue great powere
They haue great prebendes and dere
Some two or thre, and some mo
A personage to ben a playeng fere
And yet they serue the kynge also
¶ And lette to serue all that fare
To whome that woll most gyue therfore
Some woll spende, and some woll spare
And some woll laye it vp in store
A cure of soule they care not for
So they mowe money take
whether her soules be wonne or lore
Yet prokytes they woll not forsake

¶ They haue a gedering procuratour
That can the poore people enplede
And robben hem as a raisynour
And to his lorde they money lede

And catche of quycke and eke of dede
And tichen hym and hys lorde eke
And to robbe the poore can gyue good rede
Of olde and yonge, of hole and syke

¶ Therwyth they purchase hem lay fee
In londe, there hem lyketh best
And builde also brode as a cyte
Bothe in the East, and eke in the west
To purchase thus they ben ful prest
But on the poore they woll nought spende
Ne no good gyue to goddes gest
Ne sende hym some that all hath sende

By her scrupce suche woll lyue
And truste that other in to treasur
Though all her parysshe dye vnshriue
They woll nat gyue a rose floure
Her lyfe shulde be as a myrrour
Bothe to lered and to leude also
And teche the people her lele labour
Suche mister men ben al mysgo.

Some of hem ben harde nygges
And some of hem ben proude and gay
Some spende her good vpon gyggges
And fynden hem of great aray

Alas, what thynke these men to say
That thus dispended goddes good
At the dredefull domes daye
Suche wretches shul be worse than wood

¶ Some her churches neuer ne sye
Ne neuer a penye, thyder ne sende
Though the poore parishens for hũgre dye
Of peny on hem wyl they nat spende
Haue they receyuynge of the rente
They recke neuer of the remenant
Alas, the deuyll hath clene hem blente
Such one is Sathanas sotournãnte

¶ And vsen horedome and harlotry
Couetyse, pompe, and pryde
Slouthe, wrathe, and eke enuy
And sewen synne by euery syde
Alas, where thynke suche tabyde
Howe wol they accompes yelde
From hye god they mowe hem nat hyde
Such wyllers wytte is nat worth a nelde

¶ They ben so roted in richesse
That Christes pouert is for yet
Serued wyth so many messe
Hem thynketh that Manna is no mete

All is good that they mowe gete
They wene to lyue euermore
But whan god at dome is sette
Suche treasour is a feble store

¶ Anneth mote they matyns say
For countynge and courtholynge
And yet he tangleth as a taye
And vnderstont hym selfe nothyng
He woll serue both erle and kynge
For hys fyndynge and his fee
And hyde hys tythynge and his offryng
Thys is a feble charite

¶ Other they ben proude, or coueytous
Or they ben harde, or hungry
Or they ben lyberall or lecherous
Or els medlers with marchadry
Or maynteyners of men wyth maystry
Or stewardes, countours, or pledours
And serue god in ypocrysy
Such prestes ben Christes falle traytours

¶ They ben falle, they ben vengeable
And begilen men in Christes name
They ben vnstedfast and vnstable
To tray her lorde, hem thynketh no shame

To serue god they be full lame
Goddes theues, and falsly stele
And falsely goddes worde dekame
In wennynge is her worldes wele

☞ Antichrist these serue all
I pray the who may say nay?
Wyth Antichrist suche shull fall
They folowen hym in dede and fay
They seruyn hem in ryche array
To serue Christ suche falsely fayne
Why, at the dredefull domes day
Shull they not folow hym to payne?

☞ That knowē hem selfe that thei done yll
Ayenst Christes commaundement
And amende hem neuer ne wyll
But serue satan by one assente
Who sayth soth he shalbe shent
Or speketh ayenst her false lyuyng
Who so well lyueth shalbe brent
For suche ben gretter than the kynge

☞ Pope, Bishopes, and Chardinals
Chanons, Persons, and vycaire
In goddes seruyce I troue ben falle
That sacramentes sellen here

And ben as proude as Lucifere
Eche man loke whether that I lye
Who so speketh ayenst her pouere
It shal be holden heresye

Loke howe manye orders take
Onely of Christe, for hys seruyce
That the worldes goddes forsake
Who so taketh orders, or other wyse
I trowe that they shall sore agryse
For all the glose that they conne
Al sewen not this assyse
In yuel tyme they thus begonne

Loke howe many amonge hem all
Holden not thys hye way
Wyth Antichriste they shullen fall
For they wollen god betraye
God amende hem that best maye
For many men they maken shende
They weten well the sothe I saye
But the deuyel hath foule hem blende

Some on her churches dwell
Apparailled poorely proude of porte
The seuen sacramentes they done sell
In cattel catchynge is her comforte

Of eche matter they wollen mell
And done hem wronge is her dyspoyte
To affray the people they ben fell
And holde hem lower then doth the lorde

For the tydynge of a ducke
Or of an apple, or an aye
They make men sware vpon a boke
Thus they foulen Cristes fay
Suche beaten puell heauen kay
They mowen assoyle, they mowe shryue.
Wyth mennes wyues strongly play
Wyth true tyllers sturte and stryue

At the wrestlynge, and at the wake
And eche chaumtours at the nale
Market beaters, and medlyng make
Hoppen and houten with heue and hale
At fayre fresche, and at wyne stale
Dyne and drynke, and make debate
The seuen sacramentes set at sayle
How kepe suche the kayes of heuen gate

Mennes wyues they wollen holde
And though that they ben ryght sory
To speake they shull not be so bolde
For somnenge to the consy story

And make hem saye mouth I lye
Though they it sawe wyth her eye
Hys lemman holden openlye
No man so hardy to axe why

The woll haue tythynge and offrynge
Maugre whosoeuer it gruche
And twyse on the daye he woll synge
Goddes prestes were none suche
He mote on hunting wyth dogge and bleche
And blowen hys horne, and cryen hey
And sorcerye vsen as a wytche
Suche kepen yuell Peters key

Yet they mote haue some stocke or stone
Gayle paynted, and proudely dyght
To maken men lyuen vpon
And saye that it is full of myght
Aboute suche, men sette vp great lyghte
Other suche stockes shull stande therby
As darke as it were mydnyght
For it maye make no mastry

That it leude people se mowe
Thou Mary, thou worchest wōder thinges
Aboute that, men offren to nowe
Hongen broches, ouches, and rynges

The preest purchaseth the offrynges
But he nyll offre to none ymage
Wo is the soule that he for synges
That precheth for suche a pylgrimage

¶ To men and women that ben poore
That ben Christes awne lykenesse
Men shullen offre at her dore
That suffre honger and dystresse
And to suche ymages offre lesse
That mowe not fele thurst ne colde
The poore in sprete gan Christ blesse
Therfore offreth to feble and olde

☞ Buckelers brode, and sweardes longe,
Baudrke, wyth baselardes kene
Such toles about her necke they honge
Wyth Antichrist suche preestes ben
Upon her dedes it is well sene
Whome they seruen, whome they honoren
Antichristes they bene clene
And goddes goodes fally deuouren

¶ Of scarlet and grene gay gownes,
That mote be shape for the newe
To clyppen and kyssen .counten in towues
The damoseles that to the daunce sewe

Cutted clothes to sewe her hewe
Wyth longe pykes on her shone
Our goddes gospell is not trwe
Eyther they seruen the deuill or none

¶ Nowe ben preestes pokes so wyde
That men must enlarge the vestemente
The holy gospell they done hyde
For they contraryen in rayment
Suche preestes of Lucifer ben sent
Lyke conquetours they ben arayde
The prude pendauntes at her ars ypent
Falsely the truth they han betrayde

¶ Shryfte syluer suche wollen aske is
And woll men crepe to the crouche
None of the sacramentes saue askes
Wythout mede shall no man touche
On her byshoppe theyr warant vouche
That is lawe of the decre
Wyth mede and money thus they mouche
And thus they sayne is charite

¶ In the myddes of her masse
The nyll haue no man but for hyre
And full shortly let forth passe
Suche shull men fynde in euery shyre

That personages for profyte desyre
To lyue in lykinge and in lustes
I dare not sayne, Sans ose ieo dyre
That suche ben antichristes preestes

Or they yef the bishoppes why
Or they mote ben in hys seruyce
And holden forth her harlotry
Suche prelates ben of feble emprise
Of goddes grame suche men agryse
For suche matters that taken mede
How they excuse hem, and in what wyse
Me thynketh, they ought greatly drede

They sayne that it to no man longeth
To reproue them though they erre
But falsely goddes goodesse they fongeth
And therwith maynteine wo and werre
Her dedes shulde be as bryght as sterre
Her liuinge, leude mannes lyght
They say the pope may not erre
Nede must that passe mannes might

Though a preeste lye wt his lemman all nyght
And tellen his felow, and he hym
He goth to masse anone righte
And sayeth he syngeth out of synne

Hys byde abydeth hym at hys ynne
And vyghteth hys dyner the meane whyle
He syngeth hys masse for he wolde wynne
And so he weneth god begyle

When thynketh longe tyll they be mette
And that they vsen forth all the yere
Amonge the folke when he is sette
He holdeth no man halfe hys pere
Of the byshope he hath powere
To soyle men, or els they ben lore
Hys absolution may make them skere
And wo is the soule that he singeth for

The Gryffon began for to threte
And sayd, of monkes canst thou ought
The Pyllycan sayd, they ben full grete
And in thys world much wo hath wrought
Saint benet, that her order brought
Ne made hem neuer on suche manere
I trowe it came neuer in hys thought
That they shuld vse so great power

That a man shulde a monke lord cal
Ne serue on knees, as a kynge
He is as proude as prynce in pall
In meate and drynke, and all thynge

Some weareu myter and rynge
Wyth double worsted well pdyght
Wyth royall meate and ryche drynke
And rydeth on a courser as a knyght

Wyth hauke and with hundes eke
Wyth broches or ouches on hys hode
Some say no masse in all a weke
Of deinties is her moste foode
Wyth lordshyppes and wyth bondmen
Thys is a royall religion
Saynt Benet made neuer none of hem
To haue lordshyppe of man ne towne

Nowe they ben queynte and curious
Wyth fyne clothe cladde and serued cleane
Proude angry, and enuious
Malyce is muche that they meane
In catchyng crafty and couetous
Lordly lyuen in great likynge
This liuing is not religious
Accordyng to Benette in his liuinge

Thei nē clerkes, her courtes thei ouer se
Her poore tenaunce fully they flyte
The hyre that a man amerced be
The gladlier they woll it wryte

This is farre from Christes power
For all wyth couetyse they endyte
On the poore they haue no pyte
Ne neuer hem cherysshe but euer him byte

¶ And commenly suche ben comon
Of poore people, and of hem begete
That thys perfection han ynomen
Her fathers ryden nat but on her fete
And trauaylen sore for that they ete
In power lydeth ponge and olde
Her fathers suffreth drought and wete
Many hongry meles, thurst, and colde

¶ And all thys the monkes han forsake
For Christes loue and saynte Benette
To pryde and ease haue hem take
Thys ryligion is yuell beseate
Had they ben out of relygion
They must haue hanged at the plowe
Thrashyng & dykynge fro towne to towne
Wyth sory mete, and not halfe ynow

¶ Therfore they han this all forsake
And taken to ryches, pryde, and ease
Full few for god woll monkes hem make

Lytel is suche order for to prayse
Saynt Benet ordayned it not so
But badde hem be therelyche
In churlyche maner lyue and go
Boystous in earth, and not lordlysh

¶ They dysclaunder saynt Benette
Therfore they haue hys holy curse
Saynt Benet wyth hem neuer mete
But yf they thought to robbe hys purse
I can no more hereof tel
But they ben lyke tho before
And clene serue the dyuell of hell
And ben hys treasure and hys store

☞ And all suche other counterfaitours
Chanons, Canons, and such dysgysed
Ben goddes enemyes and traytours
Hys true religion han foule dysguysed
Of freres I haue tolde before
In a makynge of a Crede
And yet I coulde tel worse and more
But men wolde werien it to rede

☞ As goddes goodnesse no man tell might
Wyte ne speake ne thinke in thought

To her falshed, and her vntryght
May no man tell that euer god wrought
The Gryffon sayde, thou canst no good
Thou came neuer of no gentyll kynde
Other I trowe thou waxest wood
Or els thou hast loste thy mynde

Shulde holy churche haue no hede
Who shulde be her gouernayle
Who shulde her rule, who shulde her reede
Who shulde her forthren, who shuld auayle
Eche man shall lyue by his trauayle
who best doth shall haue most nede
wyth strength yf men the churche assayle
wyth strength men must defende her nede

And the pope were purely poore
Nedy, and nothynge ne hadde
He shulde be dryuen from doore to doore
The wycked of him nolde not be dradde
Of suche an heed men wolde be sadde
And fyrstfully lyuen as hem lust
wyth strength, amendes suche be made
with wepen wolues from shepe be wust

Yf the pope and prelates wolde

To begge, and bydde, bowe and bozowe
Holy churche shulde stande full colde
Her seruauntes sytte and soupe sozowe
And they were noughty foule and hozowe
To wozshyppe god men wolde wlate
Bothe on euen and on mozowe
Suche harlotry men wolde hate

¶ Therfoze men of holy churche
Shulde ben honest in all thynge
wozshyppfully goddes wezkes werche
So semeth it to serue Chzist her kynge
In honest and en clene clothynge
wyth vessels of golde and clothes ryche
To god honestly to make offrynge
To hys lozdshyppe none is liche

¶ The Pellican caste an houge crye
And sayde alas, why sayest thou so
Chzist is our heed that sytteth on hye
Heddez ne ought we haue no mo
we ben hys membzes both also
And father he taught vs to cal hym als
Maysters to be called defended he tho
Af other maysters ben wycked and fals

That taketh mayſtry in hys name
Gooſtly, and for earthly good
Kynges and lordes ſhulde lordſhyp haue
And rule the people wyth mylde mode
Chriſt for vs that ſhedde hys blode
Badde hys preeſtes no mayſterſhyp haue
Ne carke nat for cloth ne fode
From euery myſcheſe he wyll hem ſaue

Her riche clothing ſhalbe ryghtwyſneſſe
Her treaſure, true lyfe ſhalbe
Charite ſhalbe her ryche ſſe
Her lordſhyppe ſhalbe vnite
Hope in god, her honeſte
Her veſſell clene conſcience
Pooze in ſpirite, and humilite
Salbe holy churches defence

What ſayd the Gryffon may the greue
That other folkes faren wele
What haſte thou to done wyth her lyue
Thy falſheed eche man may fele
For thou canſt no catell gette
But lyueſt in londe as a lorel
Wyth gloſynge getteſt thou thy mete

He kareth the deuell that wonnethe in hell

¶ Ye wolde that eche mā there shuld dwell
For he lyueth in clene enuey
So wyth the tales that thou doest tell
Thou woldest other peopl destry
wyth your glose, and your heresye
For ye can lyue no better lyfe
But clene in hypocrisy
And bryngest the in wo and stryfe

¶ And therwyth haue not to done
For ye ne haue here no cure
Ye serue the dyuell, neyther god ne man
And he shall paye you youre hyre
For ye woll fare well at feestes
And warme clothed for the colde
Therfore ye glose goddes heestes
And begyle the people ponge and olde

¶ And all the seuen sacramentes
Ye speake ayenst as ye were slye
Ayēst tythinges, offringes w̄ your entētes
And on our lordes body falsly lye
And all thys ye done to lyue in ease
As who sayth, there ben none suche

And sayne the pope is not worth a peasse
To make the people ayen hym gruche

¶ And thys commeth in by fendes
To bringe the christen in distaunce
For they wolde that no man were feendes
Leaue thy chattrynge wyth mischaunce
Yf thou lyue well, what wylt thou more
Let other men lyue as hem lyst
Spende in good, or kepe in store
Other mennes conscyence neuer thou nyste

¶ Ye han no cure to answere fore
what meddell ye, that han not to done
Let men lyue as they han done yore
For thou shalt answere for no man
The Pellican sayd, Syr, nay
I dispised not the pope
Ne no sacramente, soth to say
But speake in charite and good hope

¶ But I dyspyse her hye pryde
Her rychesse, that shulde be poore in spiryte
Her wyckednesse is knowe so wyde
They serue god in false habyte
And turnen mekenesse in to pryde

And lowlynesse in to hye degre
And goddes worde turne and hyde,
And that am I moued by charyte

¶ To lette men to lyue so
wyth all my connynge and al my might
And to warne men of her wo
And to tel hem trouth and ryght
The sacramentes be soule heie
Yf they ben vsed in good vse
Ayenst that speake I neuer a dele
For then were I nothyng wyse

But they that vsen hym in myssemanere,
Or sette hem vp to any sale
I trowe they shall abye hem dere
Thys is my reason, thys is my tale
who so taketh hem vnryghtfullyche
Ayenst the ten commaundementes
Or by glose wreched lyche
Selleth any of the sacramentes

I trowe they do the deuell homage
In that they weten they to wronge
And therto I dare well wage
They seruen Satan for al her longe

To tythen and offren in holiome lyfe
So it be done in dewe manere
A man to houselyn and to shryfe
Weddyng, and all the other in fere

☞ So it be nother solde ne bought
Ne take ne gyue for couetyse
And it be so taken it is nought
Who selleth hem so meye sore agryse
On our Lordes body I do not lye
I saye soth thorowe trewe rede
Hys fleshe and blode through hys mysterye
Is there, in the forme of brede

¶ How it is there, it nedeth not stryue
Whethe it be subgette or accydent
But as Christ was, when he was on liue
So is he there verament
Yf pope or cardynall lyue good liue
As Chryst commaunded in his gōspel
Ayenst that woll I not stryue
But me thynketh they liue not well

¶ For yf the people liued as god bede
Pryde and hyghnesse he shylde dispise
Rychesse, couetyse, and crowne hn hede

The thyrde parte.

Wekenesse and powerte he shulde vse
The Gryffon sayde he shulde abye
Thou shalbe brent in balefull fyre
And all thy secte I shall dystrye
Ye shall hanged by the swyre

Ye shullen be hanged and to drawe
Who gyueth you leaue for to preache
Or speake agaynst goddes law
And the people thus falsely teache
Thou shalt be cursed wyth boke and bell
And dysseuered from holy churche
And clene ydampned into hell
Otherwyse but ye woll worche

The Pellycan sayd that I ne drede
Your cursynge is of lytell value
Of god I hope to haue my mede
For it is falshed that ye shewe
For ye ben out of charite
And wylneth vengeaunce, as dyd Nero
To suffern I woll redy be
I drede not that thou cãst do
Christ bad ones suffre for hys loue
And so he taught all hys seruauntes

And but thou amende for his sake aboue
I drede not all thy maputenaunce
For yf I drede the worldes hate
Ye thynketh I were lytell to prayse
I drede nothynge youre hye estate
Ne I drede not your displeasse

Twolde ye turne and leue your pryde
Youre hye porte, and your rychesse
Your curlynge shulde not go to wyde
God bryngе you into ryghtwysnesse
For I drede not your tiranny
For nothynge that ye can done
To suffre I am al redy
Syker I recke neuer howe soone

The Gryffou grynned as he were wode
And loked louelye as an owle
And swore by cokes hert bloode
He wolde hym tere euery doule
Holy churche thou dysclaundrest foule
For thy reasons I will the all to rate
And make thy flesche to rote and moule
Losel, thou shalt haue harde grace

The Gryffon flewe forth on his waye

The Pellycane dyd sytte and wepe
And to hym selfe he gan saye
God wolde that any of Christes shepe
And herde, and ytake kepe
Eche a worde that here sayd was
And wolde it wryte and well it kepe
God wolde it were all for hys grace

Plowman

¶ I answerde, and sayd I wolde
Yf for my trauyle any man wolde pay
Pelycan. He sayde yes, these ỹ god han selde
For they han store of money
Plowman. I sayde, tell me and thou maye
why tellest thou mens trespace?
Pelycan. He sayd, to amende hem in good fay
yf god woll gyue me any grace

¶ For Christ hym selfe is lykened to me
That for hys peop'le dyed on rode
As fare I, tyght so fareth he
He fedeth hys byrdes wyth his blode
But these done yuel ayenst god
And ben hys fone vnder frendes face
I tolde hem howe her lyuynge stode

God amende hem for hys grace
Plowmã. what ayleth the Griffõ, tell why
That he holdeth on that other ſide
For they two ben lykely
And wyth kyndes robben wyde
Pellican. The foule betokeneth pryde
As Lucifer, that hygh flew was
And ſyth he dyd hym an euell hyde
For he agylted goddes grace

As byrde flyeth vp into the ayre
And lyueth by byrdes that ben mcke
So theſe ben flowe vp into dyſpayre
And ſchended ſely ſoules eke
The ſoules that ben in ſynnes ſeke
He culleth hem, kncle therfore alas
For bryby goddes forbode breke
God amende it for hys grace

The hynder parte is a lyon
A robber and a rauynere
That robbeth the people in earth a downe
And in erth holdeth none hys pere
So fareth thys foule both ferre and nere
And with tẽporel ſtrength ther people chaſe

As a lyon proude in erth here
God amende hem for hys grace

Pellican

¶ He flew forth wyth hys wynges twayne
All droupynge, dased, and dul
But sonne the gryffon came agayne
Of hys foules the earth was full
The Pyllycan he had cast to pull
So great a nombre neuer sene there was
what maner of foules tellen I woll
Yf god woll gyue me of hys grace

¶ wyth the griffon comen foules fele
Raupns, rokes, crowes, and pye
Gray foules, agadred wele
I gurde aboue they wolde hye
Gledes and bosardes wherin hem by
whyte molles and puttockes tokē her place
And lapwinges, that well commeth lye
This felowshyp han for gerde her grace

¶ Lange the Pellican was oute
But at last he commeth againe
And brought with him the Phenix stoute
The Grikkon wold haue slow ful faine

Hys foules that flewen as thicke as raynē
The Penyx tho began hem chace
To flye from hym ꝛc was in vayne
For he did vengeaunce and no grace

☞ He slewe hem downe wythout mercy
There astarte neyther free ne thral
On hym they cast a ruful crye
wheu the Gryffon downe was fall
He bete hym not, but slewe hem all
whyther he hem droue no man may trace
Under the erth me thought they yal
Alas they had a feble grace

¶ The Pellycan then axed ryght
For my wrytynge yf I haue blame
who woll for me fyght of flyght?
who shall shelde me from shame
He that had a mayde to dame
And the lambe that slayne was
Sal shelde me from gostly blame
For erthely harme is goddes grace

☞ Therfore I praye euery man
Of my wrytynge haue me excused
Thys wrythynge wryteth the Pellican
That thus these people hath dyspysed

The thyrde parte
For I am frecche fully aduysed
I nyll not maynteyne hys manace
For the deuell is often dysguysed
To bryngе a man to yuell grace

Wyteth the Pellican and not me
For herof I nyl not auowe
In hye ne in lowe, ne in no degre
But as a fable take it ye mowe
To holy churche I wyll be bowe
Eche man to amende hym Chryst lēde space
And for my wrytyng me alowe
He that is almighty for hys grace

Thus endethe the boke of
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churche yarde at the sygne
of the Hyll by Wyl=
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